

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Criminal Investigation Division
Investigative Activity Report**

Case Number:

1000-0484

Case Title:

Shell Puget Sound Refinery

Subject of Report:

20170203 Interview of Erwin Rommel, United Steel Workers

Reporting Office:

Seattle, WA, Area Office

Activity Date:

February 3, 2017

Reporting Official and Date:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Agent

10-FEB-2017, Signed by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Approving Official and Date:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Special Agent in Charge

10-FEB-2017, Approved by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Special Agent in Charge

SYNOPSIS

On February 3, 2017, at approximately 1400 hours, I interviewed Erwin Rommel, the Bargaining Unit Chair for the United Steel Workers Local 12-591, in Mount Vernon, Washington

DETAILS

On February 3, 2017, at approximately 1400 hours, I interviewed Erwin Rommel, the Bargaining Unit Chair for the United Steel Workers Local 12-591, in Mount Vernon, Washington regarding his information about the testimony of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). After being notified of the identity of the interviewing agent and the nature of the interview, Rommel, in substance, provided the following information:

On November 4, 2015, he attended the Washington State Labor and Industries Department of Safety and Health (DOSH) closing conference regarding the violations which occurred at the Shell Puget Sound Refinery (SPSR) in February 2015. DOSH employee (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was giving a discussion of the contents of the closing conference. He did not find the results of the closing conference surprising as the Union has heard complaints from SPSR hourly employees regarding the refinery pushing employees to finish work ahead of schedule, prior to the 2015 incident. He found the interviews of SPSR salary personnel to be typical, in that they "were throwing the hourly employees under the bus."

At the conclusion of the meeting, he was speaking in a hallway with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) during the February 2015 turnaround, when (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) believed part of the closing conference information to be incorrect.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) explained that during the closing conference it was noted that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), was a first time shift leader. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) further explained that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) had been doing similar functions in previous SPSR turnarounds. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) went on to state that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was an STL during the 2014 SPSR turnaround which involved the catalytic cracking unit (CAT).

After the conversation with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) he went back and reviewed the testimony that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) gave during the September 22, 2015, interview with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). According to his review of the transcript, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) states that the 2015 SPSR turnaround was the first time (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was assigned to be (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) further stated that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) only became (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). He believes that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was acting as a "new guy" in order to reduce (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) exposure as being responsible for the release which occurred during the February 2015 SPSR turnaround. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was the (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) during the February 2015 SPSR turnaround. He believes that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) has stated that this was his first STL turnaround on several occasions.

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He remembers (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was assigned to be the (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) of the 2014 SPSR turnaround because he personally brought (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) permits to co-sign during the aforementioned turnaround. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) not only co-signed permits, but (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) directed operators and operators were reporting to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) during the 2014 CAT turnaround. He believes that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was an (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) in approximately in 2012 or 2013. There is a possibility that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) may not have been qualified to co-sign for permits during the 2014 turnaround, but at this time he is unsure of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) training status.

He has reviewed many of the transcripts of interviews of both salaried and hourly employees of the SPSR and believes that the hourly employees were straightforward and honest with the events of the February 2015 SPSR turnaround. There are only two salaried employees he believes have been honest with the DOSH investigation, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). He believes that this type of information and lack of honesty leads to the lack of confidence hourly Shell employees have in the management (salaried) employees at SPSR.

AGENT NOTE: At the end of the interview, Rommel suggested that EPA CID acquire (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) training records and determine when and if (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) has been trained to co-sign for SPSR permits as he has been signing for permits since at least 2014.